

On Imperative Subjects in English Jaehoon Choi (University of Arizona)

INTRODUCTION This paper investigates the syntactic status of proper nouns and bare nouns in imperatives. Although they are claimed to be imperative subjects in English in the literature, I argue that proper and bare nouns are topical elements sitting in [Spec, JussiveP], co-referential with the true subject, on the basis of their semantic and syntactic properties.

PUZZLE In the literature on imperatives (e.g., Zanuttini 2008; Zanuttini et al. 2012), it has been argued that not only second person pronouns but also proper/bare nouns can be imperative subjects. The main argument in favor of the subjecthood of proper/bare nouns is based on the fact that such nouns, though they look like third person DPs, bind second person pronouns, rather than third person pronouns, only in the context of imperatives, as in (1). That is, proper/bare nouns are understood to refer to the addressee. In the context of non-imperatives (i.e., declaratives or interrogatives), however, the binding facts observed in (1) disappear, as in (2-3).

As a matter of fact, there are two interesting differences between proper/bare nouns in question and the second person pronoun subject in English imperatives. First, as discussed in Zanuttini (2008), imperative sentences containing a pronominal subject can be used in isolation, as in (4a), while imperatives with the claimed proper/bare noun subject cannot be used in isolation, as in (1). Second, proper/bare nouns do not behave in the same way as second person pronouns with respect to the so-called ‘inverted imperatives’. Affirmative imperatives with a pronominal subject (e.g., (4a)) can be negated in two ways: (i) non-inverted imperatives with [Subject+*don't*] word order, as in (4b), and (ii) inverted imperatives with [*don't*+Subject] word order, as in (4c).

Interestingly, attempting to derive inverted imperatives from the second conjuncts of the sentences in (5), on the assumption that proper/bare nouns are imperative subjects, only yields ungrammatical sentences, as in (6). The grammatical inverted imperatives in fact involves [Proper/BareN+*don't*+Subject] word order, as in (7). The fact that it is *you* rather than proper/bare nouns that appear following *don't*, as in (7), casts a doubt on the claim that proper/bare nouns are imperative subjects. Two questions then arise: (Q1) if proper/bare nouns are not imperative subjects, what is their syntactic status?; (Q2) how can we ensure the co-referentiality between proper/bare nouns and the true subject *you*?

ASSUMPTIONS Two cornerstones upon which I develop my analysis are Zanuttini et al. (2012) and Potsdam (2007). Zanuttini et al. assumes Kratzer’s (2009) agreement system (cf. (8)) and accounts for the binding facts in (1) by proposing: Jussive° bears second person; imperative subjects bear unvalued person; T-Jussive°, created by head-movement, binds as a λ -operator (cf. (9b)) and agrees with the subject via *Feature Transmission under Binding* (8a). Potsdam proposes (10): the subject sits in [Spec, TP]; *don't*, which arises from *do*-insertion, is generated in T°, and head-moves to C° for inverted imperatives (10). If we combine (9) and (10), abstracting away from agreement, the resulting structure is as illustrated in (11), which does not provide a syntactic position for proper/bare nouns. We have already seen in (7) that in inverted imperatives, proper/bare nouns precede *don't*. Given that the subject position in (11) is reserved for the subject *you*, proper/bare nouns do not fit in the structure in (11).

PROPOSAL In order to capture the expected [Proper/BareN+*don't*+*you*] order, I propose that proper/bare nouns occupy [Spec, T-JussiveP], as an Operator, as in (12). Specifically, T-Jussive° binds and agrees with the subject via *Feature Transmission under Binding*, and the subject obtains second person, as suggested by Zanuttini et al.. The proper/bare noun in the numeration merges in [Spec, T-JussiveP]. T-Jussive°, being a λ -operator, binds and agrees with the proper/bare noun via *Predication* (8b). This account not only captures the correct word order, but also has a merit of ensuring the co-referentiality between the subject and the proper/bare noun (cf. Kratzer 2009). Furthermore, when imperatives containing proper/bare nouns are coordinated (e.g., (1)), the members of the set denoted by the vocative are exhaustively bound by the proper/bare noun of each conjunct. For example, if the vocative includes *Tom* in addition to *Mary* and *John* in (1a), one would expect a third imperative sentence that is directed to *Tom*.

What further supports the topichood of proper/bare nouns is the fact that proper/bare nouns refer to contextually determined individuals, which can be overtly expressed in the form of vocative. The obligatory co-referentiality between the true imperative subjects and proper/bare nouns does not receive an adequate analysis if one assumes that proper/bare nouns are merely topics in a general sense. While proper/bare nouns always co-refer with the subject, general topics can co refer with an object as well (Zanuttini 2008), as in (13).

CONCLUSIONS In this paper, I have argued that proper/bare nouns are topical elements rather than imperative subjects, on the basis of their semantic and syntactic properties which are not shared with the second person pronouns.

- (1) a. (Kids_{John, Mary},) **John**_i raise **your**_{i/*his_i} hand *(, **Mary**_j wiggle **your**_{j/*her_j} fingers)!
 b. (Kids_{boys, girls},) **Boys**_i raise **your**_{i/*his_i} hand *(, **girls**_j wiggle **your**_{j/*her_j} fingers)!
- (2) a. **John**_i raised **his**_{i/*your_i} hand, while **Mary**_j wiggled **her**_{j/*your_j} fingers.
 b. Did **John**_i raised **his**_{i/*your_i} hand, while **Mary**_j wiggled **her**_{j/*your_j} fingers?
- (3) a. **Boys**_i raised **their**_{i/*your_i} hand, while **girls**_j wiggled **their**_{j/*your_j} fingers.
 b. Did **boys**_i raised **their**_{i/*your_i} hand, while **girls**_j wiggle **their**_{j/*your_j} fingers?
- (4) a. (You) Try again! b. **(You) Don't** try again! c. **Don't you** try again!
- (5) a. (Kids_{Mary, John},) Mary stop hitting your brother, **John don't cry!** [P(roper)N+don't]
 b. (Kids_{boys, girls},) Boys raise your hands, **girls don't raise your hands!** [B(are)N+don't]
- (6) a. (Kids_{Mary, John},) Mary stop hitting your brother, ***don't John cry.** * [don't+PN]
 b. (Kids_{boys, girls},) Boys raise your hands, ***don't girls raise your hands!** * [don't+BN]
- (7) a. (Kids_{Mary, John},) Mary stop hitting your brother, **John don't you cry!** ✓ [PN+don't+you]
 b. (Kids_{boys, girls},) Boys raise your hands, **girls don't you raise your hands!** ✓ [BN+don't+you]

(8) Kratzer (2009)

- a. *Feature Transmission under Binding*: The phi-feature set of a bound DP unifies with the phi-feature set of the verbal functional head that hosts its binder.
- b. *Predication (Specifier-Head Agreement under Binding)*: When a DP occupies the specifier position of a head that carries a λ -operator, their phi-feature sets unify.

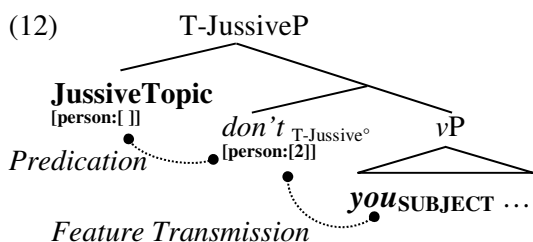
(9) Zanuttini et al. (2012): *Imperatives*

- a. $[_{T\text{-Jussive}P} T\text{-Jussive}^\circ [_{21} [_{vP} \text{SUBJECT}_{[person:[]]} v^\circ \dots]]$
- Feature Transmission*
- b. $[[\text{Jussive}^\circ]] = [\lambda x: x = \text{addressee}(c). [\lambda w. vP(x)(w)]]$

(10) Potsdam (2007): *Inverted imperatives*

$[_{CP} [C' \text{ don't } [_{TP} \text{you}_{\text{SUBJECT}} [T' t_{\text{don't}} [_{vP} \dots]]]]]$

(11) $[_{T\text{-Jussive}P} \text{ don't } [_{vP} \text{you}_{\text{SUBJECT}} v^\circ [_{VP} \dots]]]$



(13) As for **Mr. Conti**_i, **pro**_{j/*i} write **him**_i a thank you note!

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